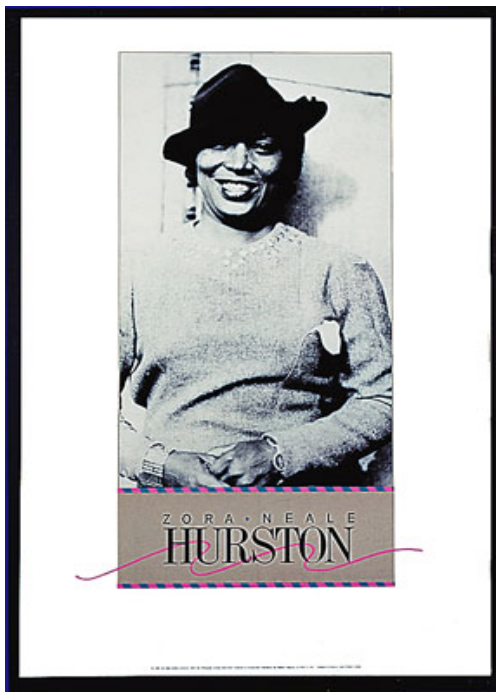


## **Malcolm X**

### **b. Malcolm Little** **(1925--65)**

**African-American activist; born in Omaha, Nebraska. Malcolm claimed his father, a minister and follower of Marcus Garvey, was murdered by racists in Lansing, Michigan. Moving to Boston, Malcolm turned to pimping and drugs as a teenager. He was sentenced to ten years in prison for burglary (1946) where he**

**discovered the anti-white, Black Muslim. Joining the Muslims (1952), he became a recruiter, changed his name, and came to national attention with his writings and through a television documentary (1959), both of which tended to portray him as a threat to white people. Breaking with the Muslims (1964), he founded the Muslim Mosque in an effort to internationalize the Afro-American struggle and journeyed to Muslim lands abroad where he was impressed with their lack of racial bias. Returning to the U.S.A. convinced that whites were not inherently racist, he called himself El-Hajj Malik El Shabazz and formed the Organization of African American Unity, hoping to cooperate with progressive white groups. Before his assassination in the Audubon Ballroom in New York City (March 1965), he came to believe that leaders of the Nation of Islam and powerful elements within the U.S. government wanted him dead; the only legal trial put all the blame on members of the Nation of Islam. Alex Haley helped immortalize him as co-author of The Autobiography of Malcolm X (1965), and Spike Lee's 1992 film renewed interest in the man and his message. He proved as powerful after his death as alive, influencing disparate movements with his**



# Zora Neale Hurston

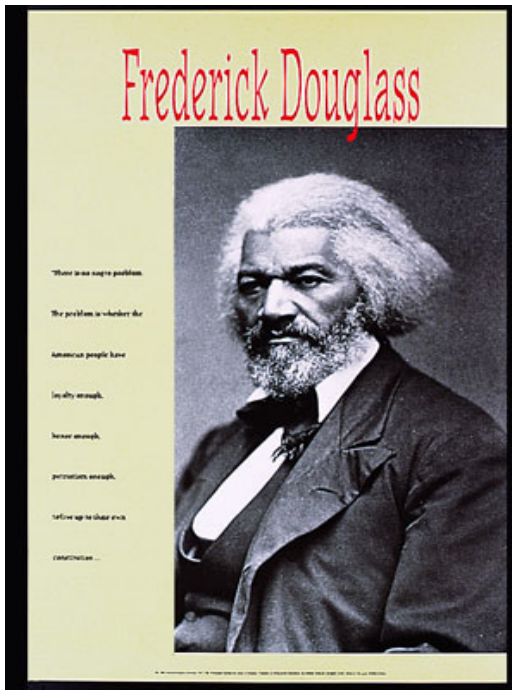
(1891 - 1960)

Zora Neale Hurston was an American author who wrote stories, novels, anthropological folklore and an autobiography.

She died in 1960 but her works have

increased in popularity and are passing the test of time with staying power. She was a unique artist and scientist who produced for us a large body of work that stands equal to any body of work in American Literature and world literature. About writing she wrote:

“Anyway, the force from somewhere in Space which commands you to write in the first place, gives you no choice. You take up the pen when you are told, and write what is commanded. There is no agony like bearing an untold story inside you.”



# Frederick Douglass

## b. Frederick Augustus

**Washington Baily  
(1817--95)**

**Abolitionist, author, public official; born near Tuckahoe, MD. Born into slavery (his father was white, his mother was part**

**American Indian), he was taught to read as he would have to watch a household servant before the slave was sent out to work as a field hand. In 1836 he was apprenticed to a shipyard in Baltimore, MD. he published *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* in 1845. Then, fearing for his freedom, he fled to England where he lectured with such effect that the British contributed a generous sum of money that, added to money contributed by Americans, helped him buy his freedom when he returned to the U.S.A. in 1847. He went to Rochester, N.Y., where he co-founded (with Martin Delany) the abolitionist periodical *North Star*, which he edited for 16 years (in 1851 changing its name to *Frederick Douglass's Paper*). In 1859 he took refuge in Canada for a short time because he was falsely accused of aiding John Brown. During the Civil War he urged President Lincoln to emancipate the slaves and he helped recruit African-American troops. He also held a series of government posts--assistant secretary to the Santo Domingo Commission, marshal of the District of Columbia (1877-81), district recorder of deeds (1881-86), and ambassador to Haiti (1889--91). He issued a final revision**

# George Washington Carver

(1861--1943)

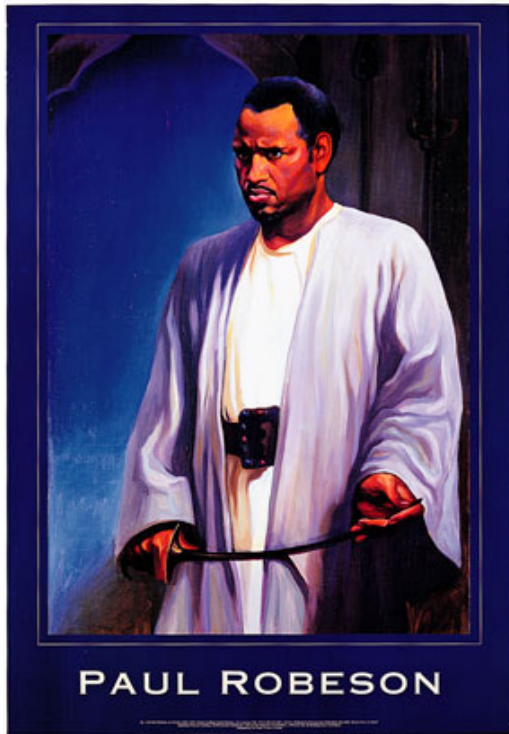


GEORGE WASHINGTON  
CARVER

Agricultural chemist, educator, botanist; born near Diamond Grove, MO. Born to slave parents, he began his education at age 14 and earned a B.S. and M.S. in Agriculture (1894, 1896) from Iowa State College. He directed the agricultural research department at Tuskegee Institute, Alabama (1896-1943), teaching

and pioneering an extension program of "movable schools" to train black farmers in agriculture and home economics. Aiming to revitalize and conserve depleted soil, Carver influenced the southern shift from single-crop to diversified agriculture by developing hundreds of products made from peanuts, sweet potatoes, and other crops, many of them commercially viable. He developed a hybrid cotton and was a noted collector of fungi. Working with severely limited resources outside the white scientific establishment, Carver published little more than his 44 Tuskegee Experiment Station bulletins (1898-1942) and, wishing his work to be widely available, obtained only three patents; nevertheless he became a researcher of international stature. He chose not to challenge the system of segregation that existed during his lifetime, but he became one of the chief models of what African-Americans could accomplish.



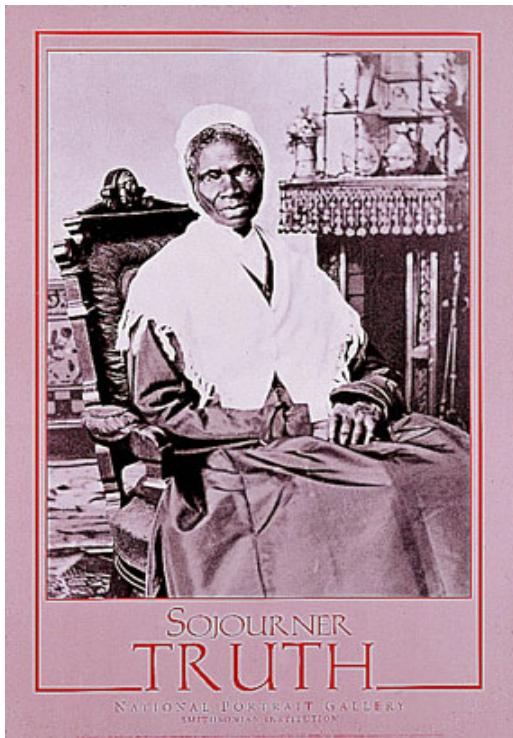


## **Paul Robeson**

**(1898-1976)**

**Paul Robeson was one of the most gifted men in the history of the world. He was an athlete, actor, author, attorney, a scholar and concert singer. Born in Princeton, New Jersey on April 9, 1898, Paul Robeson showed that**

**He gave 296 performances as Othello on Broadway. He was subsequently recognized as an internationally famous singer and performed on concert stages throughout the world. Robeson spoke and performed in over twenty languages and dialects, and became a spokesman throughout the world against exploitation, injustice, and racism. His attacks on injustice and racism in the United States became a severe international embarrassment to the United States government. In 1950, Robeson's passport was revoked by the U.S. State Department, and President Truman signed an executive order forbidding Mr. Robeson to leave the United States under penalty of five years in prison and a \$500 fine. In 1958 Robeson left the United States for England and did not return until 1963. Throughout his lifetime he fought against all**



## **Sojourner Truth**

**(1797-1883)**

**Born Isabella in 1797 in Ulster County, New York, she ran away from slavery in 1843 and changed her name to Sojourner Truth. At a time when oratory was fine art, Sojourner Truth, through her strong character and acid intelligence, was among the best and most famous anti-slavery speakers of her day.**

**Her deep, bass voice, her fierce intelligence, sense of drama, and the utter sincerity of her speeches quickly spread her fame throughout the North and astounded the unbelieving South. Frequently, efforts were made to silence her. She was beaten and stoned, but nothing could stop her. Her speeches touched the hearts of many and led to the strengthening of the abolitionist movement in the United States. One of her most famous lines was delivered in response to a man who questioned her womanhood. Recounting the trials and tribulations that the slave woman suffered and speaking as a mother of children, Sojourner Truth asked, "Ain't I a woman!" In October, 1864 she addressed an audience with President Abraham Lincoln at the White House. She**

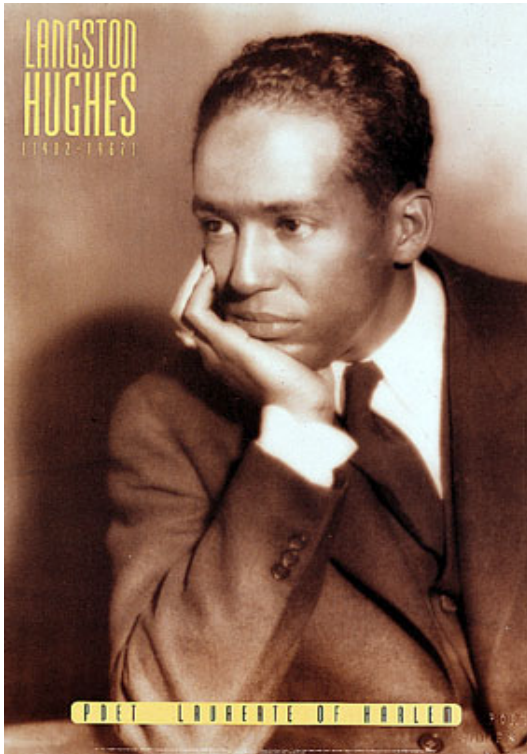
# Marcus Garvey

(1887-1940)



Among Black leaders Marcus Garvey was unique. Born August 17, 1887 in St. Ann's Bay, Jamaica, Marcus Mosiah Garvey's popularity was universal. His program for the return of African people to their motherland shook the foundations of three empires.

All subsequent Black power movements have owed a debt to his example. In building his Universal Negro Improvement Association he sought "To improve the condition of the race with the view of establishing a nation in Africa where Blacks will be given the opportunity to develop by themselves." In his famous Philosophies and Opinions, Marcus Garvey wrote, "Where is the Black man's government? Where is his president, his country and his ambassadors, his army, his navy, his men of big affairs?" Founded in 1914, the UNIA grew in just five years to include to include over six million followers. He built newspapers, schools, churches, a shipping company, printing operations, food and clothing stores. In 1919, he launched the Black Star Shipping Lines. His program was one of Black self-determination and independence and set the theme for all Black



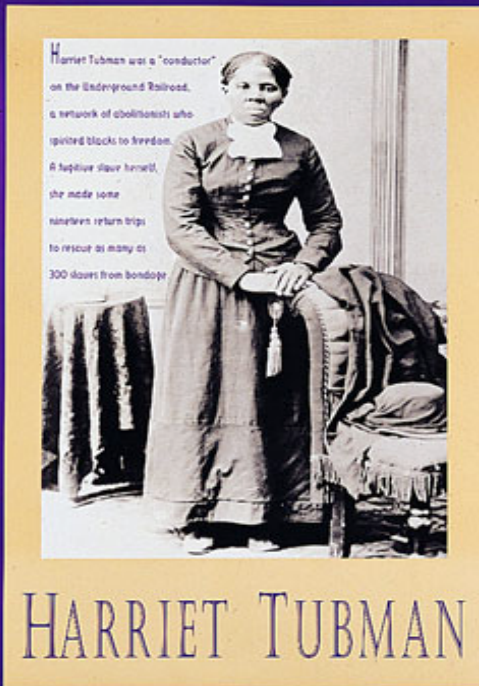
## **Langston Hughes (1902--67)**

**Poet, short-story writer, and playwright, born in Joplin, MO. He studied briefly at Columbia University, but left to explore Harlem.**

**Celebrated early on as a young poet of the Harlem Renaissance, his poetry appeared in *The Crisis* (1923-4) and *The New Negro* (1925). His first prose work, *Not Without Laughter*, appeared in 1930 to some acclaim. His other works include the play *The Mulatto* (produced on Broadway, 1935), and poetry collected in *Shakespeare of Harlem* (1942) and *Ask Your Mama* (1961). He is also well known for his "Simple Stories" which appeared in the 1950s in comic strips, in books, and on the stage.**

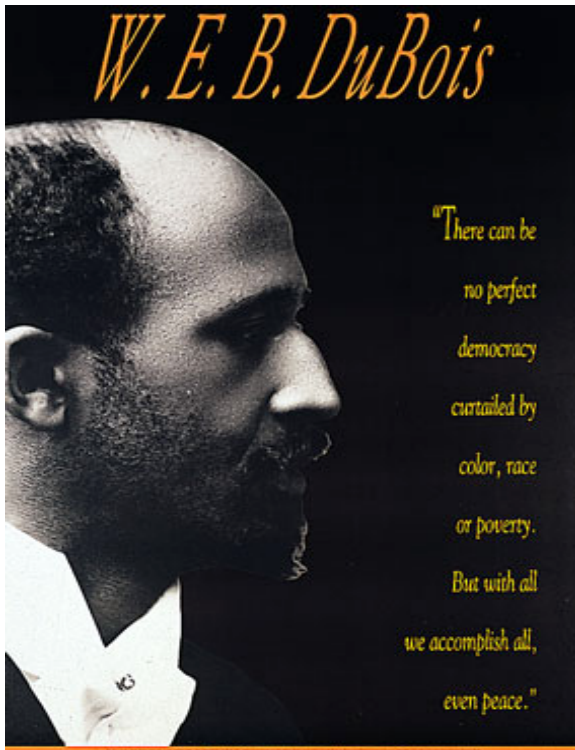


# Harriet Tubman b. Harriet Ross (1820-1913)



Abolitionist, born in Bucktown, Maryland, USA. Reared in slavery, she married a free black, John Tubman, in 1844.

He opposed her plans to flee north, so she escaped alone via the Underground Railroad (1849); over the next decade she led nearly 300 Maryland slaves to safety, including several siblings and her elderly parents. Known as "the Moses of her people," she was devoutly religious and a believer in decisive action. She helped John Brown organize his 1859 raid on Harper's Ferry, VA, but was prevented by illness from accompanying him. During the Civil War she repeatedly went behind enemy lines to spy for the Union and recruit slaves to fight in the army. In her later years, living in Auburn, NY, she helped support relatives and other former slaves and raised money for freedmen's schools and a home for elderly blacks.



# W. E. B. Du Bois

## b. William Edward Burghardt Du Bois (1868--1963)

Editor, *Ph.D.* historian, sociologist, political activist, author; born in Great Barrington, Mass. He was educated at Fisk University (1885-88), where he was shocked by the racial segregation he experienced in the South.

He went on to take a Ph.D. at Harvard (1895) with two years at the University of Berlin (1892-94). He was an activist African-American middle class to change racial politics. Founding the Niagara Movement (1905) to fight segregation, he also organized its official magazine, *Horizon: A Journal of the Color Line* (1907-10). He served as director of publications and research for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in New York, editing *Crisis: A Record of the Darker Races* (1910-34). However, when he argued that African-Americans should voluntarily segregate themselves to organize economically during the Great Depression of the 1930s, he alienated the NAACP leadership, so he resigned in 1934. Forced to retire at age 76, he returned to the NAACP, serving as director of special research (1944-48). Chairman of the Peace Information Center, an antinuclear weapons group, he was indicted as a foreign agent in 1951 and although acquitted, his passport was revoked (1952-58). He later toured Europe, China, and the Soviet

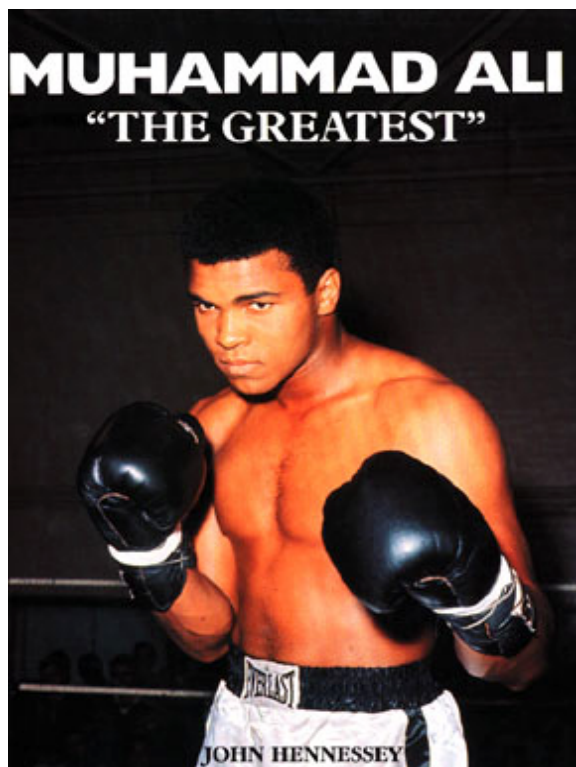


# **Martin Luther King, Jr.**

**b. Michael L. King  
(1929--68)**

**Baptist minister, civil rights leader; born in Atlanta, GA. Young Martin graduated from Morehouse College (GA.) (1948) and Crozer Theological Seminary (1951) and then took a Ph.D. from Boston University (1955), where he also met his future wife, Coretta Scott, with whom he had four children. Ordained a minister in 1947 at his father's Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, he became**

**pastor of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama in 1955. In 1957, he was chosen president of the newly formed Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and he began advocating his nonviolent approach to achieving results; he would base his approach on the ideas of Henry David Thoreau and Mohandas Gandhi. He moved to Atlanta in 1959 to become co-pastor of his father's church and in the ensuing years gave much of his energies to organizing protest demonstrations and marches in such cities as Birmingham, Ala. (1963); St. Augustine, Fla. (1964); and Selma, Ala. (1965). During these years he was arrested and jailed by Southern officials on several occasions. King's finest hour came on August 28, 1963, when he led the great march in Washington, D.C., that culminated with his famous "I have a dream" speech at the Lincoln Memorial. At the height of his influence, he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964. In the spring of 1968 he went to Memphis, Tenn., to show support for the striking city workers and he was shot and killed as he stood on the balcony of his motel there. ( James Earl Ray would plead guilty to the murder.) With serene confidence derived from his non-violent philosophy, he had advocated a program of moderation and inclusion. Dr. King had been the guiding light for 15 of the most crucial years in America's civil rights struggle.**



# Muhammad Ali

(1942-- )

Boxer, born in Louisville, Kentucky. From 1956-60, as Cassius Clay, he fought as an amateur (winning 100 of 108 matches) before becoming the light-heavyweight gold medalist in the 1960 Olympics. Financed by a group of Louisville businessmen, he turned professional and by 1963 had won his first 19 fights. In 1964, he won the world heavyweight championship with a stunning defeat of Sonny Liston. After that,

he announced that within two years, he was stripped of his title in 1967 when he refused induction into the US Army on religious grounds. His action earned him both respect and anger from different quarters, but he did not box for three and one-half years when in 1971 he lost to Joe Frazier . A few months later the US Supreme Court affirmed his right to object to military service on religious grounds and he regained the title in 1974 by knocking out George Foreman in Zaire, Africa. Ali defended his title ten times before losing to Leon Spinks in 1978. When he defeated Spinks later that same year, he became the first boxer ever to regain the championship twice. Famous for his flamboyant manner, his boasting predictions of which round he'd defeat his opponent, and his doggerel verse ("float like a butterfly, sting like a bee"), he was also recognized as one of the all-time great boxers with his quick jab and footwork. He compiled a career record of 56 wins, five losses, with 37 knockouts, before retiring in 1981. In the 1980s it was revealed that he was suffering from a form of Parkinson's disease. He made





# Duke Ellington

b. Edward Kennedy  
Ellington  
(1899--1974)

Composer, orchestra conductor, jazz musician; born in Washington, D.C. Raised in a moderately well-to-do family, his father being a White House butler and later a blueprint-maker for the U.S. Navy, he studied piano and painting from age six and acquired his nickname from a boyhood friend. He began subbing for ragtime pianist Lester Dishman

sponsored by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People while in high school before graduation to operate his own sign-painting business and devoted himself exclusively to music. In 1923, he and hometown associates Sonny Greer and Otto Hardwick moved to New York City and began working as "the Washingtonians." Ellington assumed leadership of the ensemble, which in 1924 made its first recordings and began a three-year residency at a Broadway speakeasy. In December 1927, the Duke Ellington Orchestra made its decisive opening at the Cotton Club. By this time, through radio broadcasts and many recordings for U.S., English, and French labels, he was internationally renowned as the foremost jazz composer and bandleader. Between 1930 and 1942, Ellington was at his most creative, composing a series of pieces that highlighted the distinct musical personalities of his loyal sidemen. During the early 1950s, Ellington was virtually alone among jazz orchestra leaders in keeping his band intact, though he suffered several key personnel changes and a reduction in the quality of his bookings. In 1959 his soundtrack for *Anatomy of a Murder* was the first commissioned from an African-American composer for a major Hollywood movie. Increasingly recognized as a major American composer, he received numerous honorary degrees and awards after 1963, including the Presidential



## **Colin Powell**

**(1937-- )**

**US Army General, born in New York City. He studied at the City College of New York, and took an Army commission, later serving in Vietnam (1962-3, 1968-9).**

**After holding a series of senior commands, he was appointed head of the National Security Council by President Reagan (1987-9), took over the Army Forces Command, and was made Chairman of the Joint Chiefs-of-Staff by President Bush (1989- ), the first African-American officer to receive this distinction. He had overall responsibility for the US military operation against Iraq in 1990-1. Britain awarded him an honorary knighthood in 1993. The same year he retired from the US Army and has since focused on promoting volunteerism as general chairman of the Presidents' Summit for America's Future.**